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## Stedman's Medical Dictionary 27th Edition

### folic acid (fo'lik)

1. A collective term for pteroylglutamic acids and their oligoglutamic acid conjugates. A collective term for pteroylglutamic acids and their oligoglutamic acid conjugates. *N*-[p-[(2-Amino-4-hydroxypteridin-6-yl)methyl]amino]benzoyl]-L(+)-glutamic acid; specifically, pteroylmonoglutamic acid (pteroylmonoglutamic acid); the growth factor for *Lactobacillus casei*, and a member of the vitamin B complex necessary for the normal production of red blood cells; present, with or without L(+)- glutamic acid moieties, in peptide linkages in liver, green vegetables, and yeast; used to treat folate deficiency and megaloblastic anemia. SEE ALSO: homocysteine. 2. The growth factor for *Lactobacillus casei*, and a member of the vitamin B complex necessary for the normal production of red blood cells. It is a hemopoietic vitamin present, with or without 11-(+)-glutamic acid moieties, in peptide linkages in liver, green vegetables, and yeast; used to treat folate deficiency and megaloblastic anemia, and to assist in lowering homocysteine levels. SYN: *Lactobacillus casei* factor, liver *Lactobacillus casei* factor, pteroylmonoglutamic acid (pteroylmonoglutamic acid). [L. folium, leaf, + -ic] Recent research has yielded a clearer understanding of the role of folic acid (folic acid) in human metabolism, identified health problems associated with dietary deficiency of folic acid (folic acid), provided evidence of therapeutic benefits of folic acid (folic acid) supplementation, and suggested that dietary allowances of folic acid formerly recommended (200 &mu; (&mu;g)/day for men and 180 &mu; (&mu;g)/day for women) are insufficient for certain persons, including pregnant women. Natural sources of folic acid (folic acid) include whole-grain breads and cereals, orange juice, lentils, beans, yeast, liver, and green leafy vegetables such as broccoli, kale, and spinach. Folic acid and cobalamin (vitamin B<sub>12</sub>) serve as

components of coenzymes in 1-carbon reactions such as the methylation of homocysteine to methionine. Folic acid deficiency results in macrocytic anemia due to impairment of erythrocyte synthesis and is associated with elevation of plasma homocysteine levels, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, including coronary atherosclerosis, stroke, and thromboembolism. Deficiency of folic acid (folic acid) in pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of neural tube defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly as well as an increased risk of preterm delivery and low birth weight. Persons with inherited deficiency of the enzyme 5,10 methylenetetrahydrofolic acid reductase have increased needs for dietary folic acid (folic acid). The prevalence of the homozygous form of this deficiency may exceed 10% of the general population. Intake of folic acid (folic acid), pyridoxine (vitamin B<sub>6</sub>), and cobalamin above the current recommended dietary allowance has been associated with a substantially-lower-risk of coronary artery disease and of neural tube defects. Nutritionists recommend at least 400 &mu (&mu;g)/day of folic acid (folic acid) for all persons, and 1 mg/day or more for pregnant women and those with elevated plasma homocysteine levels. The Food and Drug Administration requires fortification of grains and cereals with folic acid (folic acid).

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